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SURINAM FOLK-TALES.

BY A. P. AND T. E. PENARD.

DUTCH GUIANA, or Surinam, with its diverse population, offers an exceptionally fertile field to the student of folk-lore.

Scattered through the jungles bordering the numerous waterways, especially on the banks of the more or less inaccessible creeks, and in the open savannas, there are several tribes of Indians. There also are the so-called *Boschnegers* (Bush Negroes), descendants of Negroes who escaped from slavery in the early days, and, in defiance of the authorities of the time, set up independent communities in the wilderness, retaining many of their African customs and beliefs. But for the investigator who does not care to experience the hardships and dangers of a trip through the wild river-lands, in the sun-baked savannas, or to the practically unknown hinterland, there still remain excellent opportunities in city, town, and plantation, among the extremely mixed and interesting population in which the Negro element heavily preponderates.

So far as the writers are aware, no Negro folk-tales from Surinam have ever been published in English, and even in other languages the number published is comparatively small. The following bibliography, comprising only those items in which the tales are actually recorded, while not very extensive, is probably not far from complete.

1. M. D. TEENSTRA. *De Landbouw in de Kolonie Suriname*. Groningen 1835, Tweede Deel, p. 213.
Two fragments.
2. J. CREVAUX. *Voyages dans l'Amerique du Sud*. Paris, 1883. 190 p.
One story.
3. H. VAN CAPPELLE. *Surinaamsche Negervertellingen* (in Elsevier's *Maandschrift*, November, 1904, 14 [No. 11]: 314-327).
Two stories and reference by title to six others. The author states also that twenty-five stories were collected for him by Mr. M. H. Nahar. The writers are not aware that they have been published.¹
4. — *Suriname in Woord en Beeld* (in *Nederlandsche Zeewezen*, July 15 1905, 4 : 212-214).
One story.
5. (H. F. RIKKEN). *Ma Kankantrie* (in *De Surinamer*, Paramaribo, 1907, Chapter VI).
Five stories. This work is one of the most interesting dealing with the negro folk-lore of Surinam.

¹ Since the above was written the stories referred to (39 instead of 25) have been published by Dr. van Cappelle in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Ned. Indië*; The Hague, 1916, Deel 72, Afl. 1 en 2, 233-379.

6. H. SIEBECK. Buschnegermärchen aus Surinam (in Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde [Leipzig, 1908], 7 [pt. 1] : 10-16).
Three stories, collected by F. Stähelin.
7. F. STÄHELIN. Tiermärchen der Buschneger in Surinam (in Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde [Leipzig, 1909], 8 [pt. 3] : 173-184).
Six stories.
8. (ANONYMOUS). De Spin en de Teerpop (in Voor Onze Jeugd; Bijlage van het Maandschrift Op de Hoogte, March, 1911, 8 : 40-41).
One story, by "Tante Jo."
9. J. G. SPALBURG. Bruine Mina, De Koto-Missi. Paramaribo, 1913, pp. 10-12.
One story.
10. H. SCHUCHARDT. Die Sprache der Saramakkaneger in Surinam (Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam; Amsterdam 1914, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel 14, No. 6, p. 41).
One story.

The sounds of the words in the Negro language appearing in this article are as follows:—

<i>a</i>	.	.	.	.	.	like <i>a</i>	in <i>what</i>
<i>e</i>	.	.	.	.	.	" <i>e</i>	" <i>red</i>
<i>i</i>	.	.	.	.	.	" <i>ee</i>	" <i>feet</i>
<i>o</i>	.	.	.	.	.	" <i>o</i>	" <i>more</i>
<i>au</i>	.	.	.	.	.	" <i>ow</i>	" <i>cow</i>
<i>oe</i>	.	.	.	.	.	" <i>oo</i>	" <i>boot</i>

The consonants have the same sound as in English, with the exception of *j*, which is pronounced like *y* in *year*.

In general, the spelling will be found to agree with that given either in Wullschlägel's Deutsch-Negerenglisches Wörterbuch (Löbau, 1856) or in Focke's Neger-Engelsch Woordenboek (Leiden, 1855); but the writers have deviated from both authorities wherever they deemed it advisable for the sake of uniformity, without introducing forms which would confuse the Dutch reader. The Dutch diphthong *oe*, having the sound of *oo* in the English word *boot*, has been retained for the same reason.

The Surinam Negro is an excellent story-teller, and many of the tales collected show no mean attainment in the art. As may be expected, many of the stories may be traced to African sources, naturally influenced by the New-World surroundings. A number are of undoubted European origin, retold with characteristic alterations and additions. There are also some which seem to have no exact counterpart elsewhere.

The stories lose much by translation, and there can be no doubt that one must be thoroughly familiar with the expressive Negro language in order to appreciate them to the fullest extent. There is

always that intangible something in the manner of the narrator, the quaint and often forceful expressions, the hushed whisper or sudden outburst, the gesture, the imitative speech, the chanting phrase or little song, the occasion upon which they are told, the very environment, that impart to these stories an interest which it is impossible to maintain in translation or to appreciate in the comfort of a well-lighted library in a distant land.

As in other places in the West Indies, the stories go by the name *Anansi-(s)tori* (e.g., Spider-Stories), because in the majority of them *Anansi*, the Spider, is the chief actor. But there are many so-called *Anansi-tori* in which Spider does not play any part; and even the orthodox European nursery-tales, such as "Cinderella" and "Little Red Riding Hood," sometimes go by the same name.

Anansi is a wise, wily, treacherous rascal; a liar, a thief, and a murderer. His chief claim to attention lies in the display of his matchless cunning, which upon all occasions stands him in good stead and often is the means of saving his life. He is a supernatural being, now appearing in human form, then again as the *bona-fide* spider of our natural-histories. He possesses the power to increase his size or diminish it at will, and his resources are without limit. Indeed, he is a wonderful creature, this *Anansi*.

The name "*Anansi*" applies to all members of the order *Araneina*. Sometimes the narrator refers specifically to the large bush-spider (*Mygale* sp.), but he has particularly in mind the husky, long-legged crab-spider (*Heteropoda venatoria*) commonly found in dwelling-houses in Surinam. These harmless house-spiders conceal themselves in the triangular spaces formed by the overlapping boards, where the latter are secured to the upright studding and columns of the buildings. These little holes are called *postoros* or *postoe holo* ("post-holes").

This curious life-habit of the spider gives rise to the closing statement of a large number of the stories, to the effect that to this day *Anansi* lives in the *postoros*. And so also there is a series of stories accounting for the markings on the spider's back, — usually the result of a beating he receives at the hands of some one he has deceived. But the explanatory element is not essential to the majority of the stories. In many of the tales exhibiting this tendency the object is not to account for some natural fact; but rather, in the development of the plot, circumstances arise which lend themselves readily to an amusing explanation of the origin of some trait or fact, and furnish the narrator with a suitable formula for the end of his story. In some, however, the motive is deliberately explanatory. The story of "How Man made Woman respect him," here related, is of this type; and so are a number of others collected, among which we may mention tales accounting for the origin of Monday and the origin of labor-pains.

Among the animal-actors we find Dog, Horse, Ass, Cow, Goat, Cat, Rat, Elephant, Whale, Deer, Howling Monkey, Agouti, *Aboma* (*Boa constrictor* and *Eunectes murinus*), Snake, Caiman, Tortoise, Snail, Toad, Vulture, Cock, Hen, Wren, *Sen-sen* (cricket), Cockroach, Fly, and many others. But chief of these is Tiger (the jaguar), the mortal enemy of *Anansi*. Kings and princesses, and ordinary men and women, also play their part; and trees, vegetables, celestial bodies, inanimate objects, diseases, and even Death itself, are characters endowed with the power of speech. Then, too, there are hosts of mythical beings, among which may be mentioned the *watramama* (a water-spirit), the *boesi-mama* (a wood-spirit), the *jorka* (ghost), the *bakroe*,¹ the *leba*,² the mysterious *azema*,³ and a legion of other *takroe sani* ("bad things").

Anansi-tori are not told exclusively to children. They form an important diversion for the older people. They are told in the mining-camps, around the camp-fire in the woods, at small gatherings, and at wakes (*dede-hoso*). But they are gradually going out of fashion, and the day is not far when they will be completely supplanted by the European tales. It is considered unlucky to tell *Anansi-tori* in the daytime; but, if this is to be done, the narrator may avert the

¹ The *bakroe* is commonly conceived as a dwarf, one side of whose body is wood, and the other flesh. When any one approaches him, the *bakroe* presents his side of wood to receive the blows which he expects; but he may also take the form of an old woman, an animal, a headless cock, or an inanimate object. He haunts bridges, ditches, and wells. *Bakroes* are not very malicious unless molested, but they allow themselves to be used by the *obiaman* ("sorcerer") in his evil practices.

² The *Leba* is the spirit of Misery. She is described as having the appearance of an old woman whose body is completely covered with rags. She is bowed down by a heavy burden of debts and sins, a portion of which she is constantly attempting to pass to the unwary wanderer who approaches her. Especially children fall an easy prey to her cunning. The presence of *leba* in a person manifests itself by loss of appetite, listlessness, — a feeling as if the body were carrying an unnatural weight. At first amulets are applied; and all kinds of light objects, such as dry leaves or pieces of cork, are worn by the sufferer with the idea of *reducing* the heavy weight. But if these means fail, then the patient must submit to the *wiwiri-watra* ("herb-water") treatment, which is administered by the *obiaman*.

The reader will find more detailed descriptions of *leba* and *bakroe* in an article by F. P. and A. P. Penard entitled "Surinaamsch Bijgeloof," in the *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde*, Deel 67, Aft. 2 (The Hague, 1912), 157-183.

³ The *azema*, or *azeman*, is represented as an old woman who can cast off her skin and pass through very small openings, such as keyholes. She sucks the blood of her victim, who gradually loses his health. The *azema* may be caught in various ways. One way is to find the skin she has cast off, and rub the inside of it with Cayenne pepper: the *azema* will not be able to put on the skin, and may be captured. Another way is to throw some rice in front of the door: the *azema* feels compelled to pick up the grains, which takes her so long that she is still busy at daybreak, when she may be captured. The notion of *azema* is evidently closely allied to that of the Werwolf and the Vampire.

evil consequences of his indiscretion by first plucking a hair from his eyelids.

The *Anansi-tori* is formally opened with the words "*Er tin tin*," the meaning of which is substantially "Once upon a time." The expression is universal; and even riddles are introduced by this formula: thus, —

Er tin tin, mi mama habi wan pikin, a habi dri hai;
Ma alwasi san doe hem, nanga wan hai nomo a de krei.

Wan kokronoto.

Once upon a time, my mother has a child, it has three eyes;
But no matter what ails it, with one eye only it cries.

A cocoanut.

If the story is not popular, the listeners will at once interrupt with the words, "*Segre din din*," the meaning of which is not known to the writers; but it is not improbable that it is merely a convenient rhyme to "*Er tin tin*." If the story is monotonous or poorly told, the narrator is interrupted by an amusing conversation between two or more of the audience, followed by a so-called *koti-singi* ("cutting-song"), in which all present join. This usually has the desired effect of discouraging the story-teller. Below is an example of the dialogue and *koti-singi*:

First Speaker. A *kroejara* ("canoe") is coming from Para.

Second Speaker. What is in the *kroejara*?

First Speaker. A big *pagara*.¹ And in it there is a smaller *pagara*. And in this one there is a still smaller *pagara*, etc.

Second Speaker. And what is in the very smallest *pagara*?

First Speaker. A letter. And in this letter there is a reply containing the *koti-singi*, "*Fin, fin, fin, tori; ja ha lei agen, ha lei agen*."²

The four stories here recorded have been selected from a number of Negro tales collected by one of the writers³ in Surinam. It is the intention to publish in the near future the entire collection, comprising more than eighty tales, some of which were taken down in the original Negro dialect, the so-called *Sranam*- or *Ningre-tongo* (Surinam or Negro language), known briefly as *Ningre* (Negro). The first three stories were chosen because they have not previously been recorded from Surinam. The fourth is included to show the Surinam narrator's treatment of familiar themes.

¹ A sort of basket.

² "Fine, fine, fine story; yes, he lies again, he lies again."

³ A. P. Penard.

I. HOW MAN MADE WOMAN RESPECT HIM.

Er tin tin, women had no respect for men. They were always scolding their husbands, and calling them all kinds of bad names, such as "Stupid," "Lazy," "Beast." Anansi, too, was treated in this manner, and it humiliated him very much indeed. "I must put an end to this," he muttered. "I'll teach my wife better manners; I'll make her respect me. *Mi sa sori hem fa watra de go na kokronoto bere.*"¹

Anansi set to work and dug a deep well; and when it was deep enough, he called his wife, and asked her to bring him a ladder so that he could climb out. Scolding and jawing, as usual, she brought the ladder and set it in place. With spade in hand, Anansi climbed out of the pit; but, just as he reached the top of the ladder, he slyly dropped the spade into the pit, pretending that it was an accident.

"*Ke!*"² he exclaimed, turning to his wife, "I have just dropped the spade into the well, and I am so tired. *Tangi tangi*, (please) will you go down and get it for me?" His wife scolded him dreadfully, but she went down the ladder to fetch the spade. As she stooped to pick it up, Anansi quickly pulled up the ladder, and his wife was caught in the trap.

She began to rave and tear, called Anansi everything that was bad, and commanded him to lower the ladder; but Anansi paid no attention. He just smiled, and noted with satisfaction that the water was beginning to flow into the new well. And as the water rose, his wife scolded less and less, until it was on a level with her stomach. Then she asked her *dear* Anansi for the ladder, but Anansi paid no attention. When the water was up to her breast, she beseeched her *good Boss (Basi)* for the ladder; but Anansi paid no attention. When the water was up to her neck, she tearfully begged her *beloved master* to lower the ladder; then Anansi gave in. He lowered the ladder; and his wife, wet and shivering, meekly climbed out of the well.

But after that day she became very obedient and respectful; she never scolded her husband any more, and always addressed him as "*mi masra*" ("my master"). Other women followed her example and also became very obedient; and so to this day every woman respects her husband, and calls him "*Basi*," or "*mi masra*."

2. ANANSI EATS MUTTON.

Er tin tin, Anansi's wife had a fine fat sheep that she herself had raised. Anansi often begged her to slaughter the sheep; but she steadily refused, and scolded him angrily for his greediness. "I will

¹ I will show her how the water goes into the cocoanut's belly.

² A common exclamation, usually denoting pity or sympathy.

teach my wife not to be so stingy," muttered Anansi one night as he went to bed.

Next morning he did not get up, but pretended to be very sick. He trembled and shook so, that his wife became alarmed, and asked him what ailed him and what she could do to relieve him. "*Ke!*" replied Anansi weakly, "I don't know what the matter is, but I feel awfully sick." So he told his wife to consult with the *loekoeman*,¹ whom she would find under the big *kankantri*² in the forest. His wife did not know the *loekoeman*, but she started out to find him. As she was going out, Anansi requested her to take the children with her. "They make such a terrible noise, that I shall go crazy," he explained.

Well, as soon as his wife had departed, Anansi jumped out of bed and disguised himself as an old *loekoeman*. He pulled an old hat well over his eyes, and, hurrying over a short cut which he knew, reached the *kankantri* before his wife. After a while his wife and children arrived, and greeted him politely with a *kosi*,³ without seeing through the disguise. "*Ke, mi papa,*"⁴ spoke his wife, "*masra* Anansi is very sick. He has convulsions and terrible pains in his stomach, so he has sent me to you for some medicine to cure him."

The *loekoeman* consulted with the spirits, shook his head thoughtfully, and said, "My good woman, your husband is a very good friend of mine; and so I will tell you a good medicine to cure him, and it will not cost you anything for the advice. My friend Anansi is very sick indeed; his spirit longs for mutton, and the poor man is slowly dying from this craving. You must serve him a nice fat sheep, nicely cooked, and he alone must eat it. You and the children must not even taste it, otherwise the *takroe sani* ('evil thing') that possesses him will surely kill him. Nothing else can save him."

Anansi's wife thanked the *loekoeman* and left. As soon as she was out of sight, Anansi hurried home over the short cut, removed his disguise, and jumped into bed, where he awaited the return of his wife and children.

In a short while they arrived, and told Anansi what the *loekoeman* had said. Anansi praised the *loekoeman's* wisdom. He said that the advice was good, and he felt that the medicine would cure him.

With unwilling hands his wife and children prepared the sheep for Anansi in a most appetizing manner. Anansi ate so much mutton that he nearly burst, while his wife and children looked on with longing eyes. When he had swallowed the last mouthful, he smacked his

¹ The "doctor," a higher authority than the *kartaman* ("fortune-teller," "sooth-sayer"), but not so powerful as the *obiaman* ("sorcerer").

² *Ceiba pentandra* Gärtn.

³ A slight bending of the knees as a mark of respect; a "courtesy."

⁴ *Ke*, "my father."

lips, thanked his wife, and advised his children to follow their good mother's example and never to be stingy or greedy.

3. JAUW'S DREAM.

Er tin tin, there were two friends, Jauw and Kwakoe, who thought very much of each other. Where any one saw Jauw, he would be sure to find Kwakoe; and where any one saw Kwakoe, he would be sure to find Jauw; they were inseparable. Even at night they went to bed together; and if one of them should fall asleep first, the other would lie quietly beside him until he, too, fell asleep.

Well, one night the two friends went to bed as usual, and it happened that Jauw fell asleep first. Kwakoe, who was lying with his face toward Jauw, was greatly surprised to see a mouse come out of Jauw's nose and noiselessly leave the hut. Kwakoe wanted to find out more about this wonderful animal, for he knew that it could not be an ordinary mouse; so he got up quickly and followed the little beast.

The mouse moved stealthily in the dark shadows, took the road, and entered the forest, through which it led the way to a giant *kankantri* whose trunk was completely hidden in a tangle of *boesi-tetei*¹ that hung about it. Cautiously the mouse looked around, and, swiftly climbing up one of the bush-ropes, disappeared between the clumps of *boesi-nanasi*² that grew thickly upon the branches of the big tree. But Kwakoe, from behind a near-by bush, had seen everything, and patiently he awaited the mouse's return.

Well, after a long time the mouse again made its appearance from among the mass of *boesi-nanasi*, came down the same bush-rope, and returned to the village by the same road. The strange little animal went straight to the hut of the two friends, entered cautiously, and ran quickly into Jauw's nose before Kwakoe, who had followed it, had a chance to grab it.

As soon as the mouse had vanished, Jauw awoke with a yawn, stretched himself lazily, and rubbed the sleep from his eyes, saying to his friend, "Kwakoe, man, I dreamed a wonderful dream, which I shall not soon forget. *Ka*,³ but a man's head can take him to strange places!" Kwakoe, curious to know if Jauw's dream could have any connection with what he had just seen, asked him to tell him about it; so Jauw proceeded to relate his dream:—

"Well, then, friend Kwakoe, I dreamed that I quietly left the hut, followed the road a ways, and entered the forest. And I walked until I came to a big *kankantri* all covered with *boesi-tetei* and *boesi-nanasi*.

¹ Bush-ropes, lianes.

² An epiphyte, *Tillandsia usneoides* Linn.

³ A long-drawn-out exclamation in very common use. It generally conveys the idea of surprise or wonder.

I looked around to make sure that nobody was watching, and then I climbed up one of the bush-ropes. Hidden between the branches I discovered a great, big box, — so big that I could easily enter it through the keyhole. And what do you think I found in the box, Kwakoe? It was full of gold money, — just gold money, nothing else but gold money. *Baja*,¹ I was surprised. Happy to think that you and I would not have to work any more, I spent a long time counting the money. Then I crawled out of the box through the keyhole. I wanted to take the box back with me, but it was too heavy; so I decided to go home and get you to help me cut down the *kankantri*. I slid down the same bush-rope, and came home to tell you all about it. But you know how it is with dreams, Kwakoe. As soon as I entered the hut, I awoke. *Ka*, but a man's head can take him to strange places!"

Kwakoe, who had listened with great interest while Jauw related his dream, asked, "Do you think, friend Jauw, that you would recognize the *kankantri* if you should see it again?" — "Certainly I would," replied Jauw, "never before in my life have I seen such a big *kankantri*, or one so completely covered with *boesi-tetei* and *boesi-nanasi*. But why do you ask me that, Kwakoe?"

Thereupon Kwakoe told Jauw that it was his plan to search for the *kankantri*, and that Jauw would do better to get up and help grind the axes, so that they would have no difficulty in cutting down the tree which he thought they would have no trouble in finding. But Jauw, who knew nothing of the mouse in his own head, laughed at Kwakoe, saying that he had no desire to get up so early in the morning for the purpose of sharpening axes to cut down a *kankantri* he had never really seen, and that he could not see how an intelligent man like Kwakoe could put so much faith in dreams.

Then Kwakoe told Jauw that he did not believe in dreams, either, but that this was no ordinary dream; and he related to Jauw his experience with the wonderful mouse. Jauw was amazed at what Kwakoe told him, but he was sure that Kwakoe would not tell him a lie; so he consented to go out and help sharpen the axes.

At daybreak the two friends entered the forest, and soon they came to the giant *kankantri* into which the mouse had climbed during the night. As soon as Jauw saw the big tree all covered with *boesi-tetei* and *boesi-nanasi*, he exclaimed, "Kwakoe, this is the *kankantri* I saw in my dream. It can be no other."

Kwakoe and Jauw now went to work with their axes. It was not an easy matter to cut down such an enormous tree; but the thought of finding the treasure in its branches spurred them on, and at last the forest giant tottered and crashed down with a noise like thunder.

¹ *Baja*, or simply *Ba*, means "friend" or "brother."

And, sure enough, from its branches fell a large box. As it struck the ground, it broke open from the force of its own weight, and the bright gold pieces which Jauw had seen in his dream scattered and rolled over the ground. The two friends, in their joy, embraced each other, and declared that the mouse which had come out of Jauw's nose must have been his good spirit. "*Ka!*" exclaimed Kwakoe, "it was a good thing for you that I did not catch the mouse when I tried, or you would be a dead man now."

Kwakoe and Jauw gathered up their treasure and carried it safely home. They celebrated by giving a great feast, to which everybody in the village was invited. At the feast they made it known how they came into possession of the golden treasure. They spent their money so freely, that the gold coins soon spread over the whole world and became known to every one; for I must tell you that before Kwakoe and Jauw found their treasure, gold coins were not known to any one on earth.

4. SNAKE AND HUNTER.

Er tin tin, there was a big fire in the wood. All the trees were in flames, and nearly all the animals were burned to death. To escape the terrible heat, Snake lowered himself into a deep hole. The fire raged fiercely for a long time, but was at last extinguished by a heavy rain. When all the danger was past, Snake attempted to climb out of the hole, but, try as he would, he could not scale the steep sides. He begged every one who passed to help him; but nobody dared to give him assistance, for fear of his deadly bite.

Well, at last Hunter came along. He took pity on Snake and pulled him out. But as soon as Snake was free, he turned upon Hunter with the intention of biting him. "You must not bite me after my kind act," said Hunter, warding him off. "And why shouldn't I bite you?" asked Snake. "Because," explained Hunter, "you should not do harm to him who has shown you an act of kindness." — "But I am sure that everyobdy does," hissed Snake. "You know the saying, '*Boen no habi tangi.*'"¹ — "Very well," proposed Hunter, "let us put the case before a competent judge!" Snake agreed, so together they started for the city.

On the way they met first Horse, next Ass, then Cow. To each of these Hunter and Snake told their story, and to each they put the question, "Ought any one to return Evil for Good?" Horse neighed, saying that he was usually whipped for his good services to man. Ass hee-hawed, saying that he was beaten with a stick for his good services to man. Cow bellowed that she expected to be slaughtered for her good services to man. Snake then claimed that he had won

¹ A common proverb; literally, "Good has no thanks."

the case, and lifted his head to strike Hunter; but Hunter said, "I don't agree yet; let us put the case before Anansi, who is very wise!" Snake agreed, and so they continued on their way.

Well, they came to the city where Anansi dwelled, and it so happened that they found him at home. They told Anansi how Snake had let himself down into a deep hole to escape the terrible fire that was raging in the wood; how he had begged everybody who passed for assistance; how Hunter had helped him out of the hole; and how Snake had then tried to bite Hunter. They also told Anansi how they had met Horse, Ass, and Cow, and how each of them had told them that "*Tangi foe boen na kodja*."¹ And so they had come to Anansi, who was very wise, that he might settle the dispute fairly.

Anansi looked thoughtful, and, shaking his head, said, "My friends, I cannot say who is right until I have seen with my own eyes how everything happened. Let us go back to the exact spot."

Well, then all three walked back to the hole in the wood out of which Hunter had helped Snake, and Anansi asked them to act out everything just exactly as it had happened. So Snake slid down into the hole and began calling for assistance. Hunter pretended to be passing, and, turning to the hole, was about to help Snake out again, when Anansi stopped him, saying, "Wait, I will settle the dispute now. Hunter must not help Snake this time. Snake must try to get out without any assistance, so that he may learn to appreciate a kind act." Snake was obliged to remain in the hole, and he suffered much from hunger. At last, after many unsuccessful attempts, he managed to get out. But experience had been a good master, and Snake had learned his lesson well.

Well, it came to pass that some time later Hunter was caught poaching in the king's woods and was thrown into prison. Snake heard of it and made up his mind to help Hunter, so he hastened to the king's palace. Unobserved he approached the king. When he saw a good chance, he suddenly bit the king, and succeeded in making his escape before any one could catch him.

Then he made his way to the prison in which Hunter was confined, and found a way to enter it. He calmed Hunter's fears, and said, "A while ago you did me a favor, and now by experience I have learned to appreciate it. I come to aid you. Listen! I have just bitten the king, and he is very sick from the effects of the poison; in fact, he is on the point of dying. I bring you the only remedy for my deadly bite. It is known to me alone. Send word to the king that you can cure him, but that you will not do so unless he promises to give you his only daughter in marriage." So saying, Snake gave Hunter the remedy, consisting of three different kinds of leaves, and then he departed.

¹ A common proverb; literally, "Thanks for good is the cudgel."

Hunter did as Snake advised him. He sent word saying that he could cure the king, and asked as reward his release from prison and the king's daughter in marriage. Fearing death, the king consented, and allowed Hunter to try the remedy. The king was quickly restored to health. Hunter married the princess, and the teller of this tale was present at the wedding.

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